

# Sebastian Lang-Lessing

– Conductor

[www.lang-lessing.com](http://www.lang-lessing.com)



BIOGRAPHY 2023/2024

## **Music Director Korea National Opera | Music Director Emeritus San Antonio Symphony**

Sebastian Lang-Lessing has been named Music Director of the Korean National Opera in 2020. He has conducted multiple new productions since 2018 with the company. During the pandemic a new production of “Fidelio” in collaboration with the visual artist Kevork Mourad opened new ways to present Opera. Working closely with stage directors like Vera Nemirova, Vincent Boussard, Arnaud Bernard and many others. An avid advocate in education Sebastian Lang-Lessing expands his mission in South Korea through masterclasses and national touring. In 2020 he made his debut with the KBS Orchestra in Seoul conducting a Brahms program. In his third year as Music Director, the newly built KNO Academy, has now 18 singers and 3 répétiteurs and continues to expand its mission.

After ten very successful years as Music Director of the San Antonio Symphony, Sebastian Lang-Lessing became MD Emeritus to continue his relationship with the orchestra and his strong advocacy for the performing arts in South Texas. He’s currently working with city leaders on ways to finance the performing arts in the post pandemic era.

Recent highlights are the return to Budapest, for a production of Bach’s “St- Matthew Passion” in the reopening months of the renovated opera house, his Tristan/Elgar arrangement with the Cellist Istvan Vardai and the Hungarian Radio Orchestra in Budapest and the closing concerts of the Tivoli Festival in Copenhagen with Renée Fleming.

In his third season at Korea National Opera Sebastian will conduct Verdi’s “I Vespri Siciliani”, “Les Contes d’Hoffmann” and “La Bohème”. In 2023 he will take Opera Australia on a tour to the Royal Opera House in Muscat, Oman with Mozart’s “Cosi fan tutte”.

## **Global career in opera houses and concert halls**

Sebastian Lang-Lessing is fluent in five languages. His curiosity, versatility, vast repertoire and interest in all cultures distinguish him as a unique artist holding Music Director titles on all 5 continents. He proved to be a game changer in all his positions, bringing a new creative approach to every challenge. SLL conducts regularly at the major opera houses and orchestras around the world, like Berlin, Hamburg, Paris, London, Bordeaux, Lyon, Palermo, Stockholm, Oslo, Copenhagen, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Seattle, Dallas, Houston, Washington, Vancouver, Cagliari, Sydney, Melbourne, Tokyo, Beijing, Seoul, Cape Town to name some. He opened the iconic Oslo Opera house with a new production of “Porgy and Bess” in collaboration with Cape Town Opera. The relationship with this company intensified and he became the CTO’s Music Director. In Paris he collaborated with Maurice Béjart and his spectacular Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony, touring it later to Japan. SLL conducted China’s first own production of a R. Strauss’ opera, “Der Rosenkavalier” at Beijing’s NCPA revived immediately because of its tremendous success.

Sebastian Lang-Lessing’s symphonic repertoire goes way beyond his German heritage. His close connections to the Symphonies of Schumann, Mendelssohn, Brahms and Beethoven can be heard in

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exciting concerts and recordings. SLL demonstrates also a great affinity to the French, Russian, Italian, American and contemporary repertoire. His friendships with composers like Detlev Glanert, Brett Dean and Stewart Copeland resulted in a number of new commissions and premieres. With artists like Renée Fleming he enjoys a close artistic relationship, as her Album “Guilty Pleasures” for Decca demonstrates.

#### **Deutsche Oper Berlin 1993–2001**

After his Debut at the “Deutsche Oper”, Götz Friedrich engaged SLL as resident conductor, the youngest in this role. He conducted a vast repertoire of new productions and revivals, among them, the last production of his mentor Götz Friedrich. Conducting hundreds of performances in his early years and working with the leading international singers and directors were essential and formative for his future. He conducted Philip Stölzl’s highly acclaimed new production of Wagner’s “Rienzi”, released on DVD.

#### **Music Director, Nancy, Opéra National de Lorraine and Orchestre Symphonique et Lyrique 1998–2006**

His tenure as Music Director in Nancy put the company on the national map, elevated to Opéra National de Lorraine. With his orchestra, Sebastian Lang-Lessing rediscovered the late romantic French repertoire. They recorded an award winning cycle with Guy Ropartz’ symphonies. The Opera became a mecca for progressive programming and exciting modern productions. He has worked closely there with directors like Francesca Zambello, Philippe Arlaud, Olivier Py etc. A passionate educator, SLL established multiple new initiatives and concerts for children and young adults.

#### **Chief conductor, Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra 2004–2011**

During his time with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra Sebastian Lang-Lessing sharpened the orchestra’s profile by strengthening its expertise in the classical, early romantic and contemporary repertoire. With the TSO he created an annual cycle in Sydney and led the orchestra on national and international tours. Close collaboration with the leading Australian singers, soloists and composers mark his tenure. The TSO became Australia’s most recorded orchestra. A collection of 20 CDs with Australian composers was highlighted by the close collaboration with Brett Dean. SLL’s recordings of the Schumann, Mendelssohn, Mozart and Schubert Symphonies demonstrate the orchestra’s exceptional artistry. He led many masterclasses for young conductors and worked regularly with ANAM to inspire the next generation of Australian musicians. An annual joint concert with the Australian Youth Orchestra and the TSO became a highlight of many seasons.

#### **Music Director San Antonio Symphony 2009–2020**

SLL’s creation of a city wide annual festival with the participation of over 20 performing arts organization highlighted his creative season planing and sense of community collaboration. He opened the new Tobin Center with Renée Fleming and the “Four Last Songs” by R. Strauss and later with a new production of “Salome” with Patricia Racette. “14 American Preludes” was his commission project with works by composers from The Americas and Europe, celebrating the 75th anniversary of the orchestra



and its diversity. He developed and intensified various education initiatives. During his tenure the orchestra developed its own unique sound in the new hall. By creating a baroque series, incorporating

opera, commissioning new works, and performing multiple composer cycles, the orchestra widened its repertoire and stylistic versatility. SLL established a bond with many international artists and the orchestra, putting San Antonio on the map as a creative center in Texas. Yo Yo Ma, Emanuel Ax, Joshua Bell, Vadim Gluzman, Olga Kern, Susan Graham, Renée Fleming, Kirill Gerstein, Lynn Harrel, Lang Lang, Augustin Hadelich and many more were regular guests. With many of them he enjoys a long and deep artistic friendship.

### **Master Classes and teaching**

Sebastian Lang-Lessing is a thought after teacher for master classes around the world. During his time in Australia he taught Masterclasses with the Tasmanian Symphony and collaborated with ANAM in Melbourne on various projects, concerts and masterclasses. Most recently he has been given Masterclasses with the State Orchestra of Lithuania as well as the Bergen Philharmonic as part of the Talent Norge program for young conductors.

### **Studies and prizes**

Sebastian Lang-Lessing studied piano in Essen (Detlev Kraus) and Lübeck (Wilhelm Rau). In Hamburg (Klaus-Peter Seibel) and Vienna (Karl Österreicher) he studied conducting. 1990 the prestigious “Ferenc Fricsay Prize” was awarded to him after his debut concert at the Philharmonie in Berlin. He became assistant to Gerd Albrecht at the “Staatsoper Hamburg” and a year later First Kapellmeister in Rostock. He returned to Hamburg, making his debut with Harry Kupfer’s production of “Chowanschtchina” returning immediately for new production of “Rigoletto” with Andreas Homoki.

His discography for various labels can also be found on Spotify.

Status: Oktober 2023

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